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Bangalore Mirror ON SUNDAY

TEMP Max 29 | Min 19 | Humidity 66% Partly Cloudy Sensex 66,160 | Nifty 19,646 | Gold 59,390 | Silver 74,040 | Dollar 82.26 | Euro 90.79 | GBP 105.67

WIRED UP

BESCOM's move to stop electrocutions: Issue warnings

WE KEEP VIGIL

More citizens choosing private agencies to guard themselves, property

PAGE 5

As BMTC looks to increase its fleet, a question emerges — should it opt for electric or diesel vehicles? Experts, commuters weigh in

THERE'S A CATCH IN THE EV STORY

Activists point to privatisation trap in Gross Cost Contract model of acquiring electric buses

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With the success of the Shakthi scheme, Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Company might be forced to add more buses to its fleet to meet their new ridership levels. However, the question remains about which buses they should lean towards- electric or diesel.

The success of the Shakthi scheme has revealed what experts say is that the right incentive can easily change commuter behaviour about using public transport. As public transport even with all its pre-existing inconveniences was incentivised, ridership levels reached record-breaking levels for the RTCs. It was made possible due to the state government's investment in buses through the scheme. The government has budgeted Rs 4,000 crore for the Shakthi scheme.

According to data provided by officials, so far over 28 crore women have travelled across the four RTCs gathering a revenue of Rs 66,23,90,882 since the start of the scheme. In the first month, 105445047 women travelled using buses.

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The prototype of new electric bus was launched in front of the BMTC Central Office, on Friday

"Eventually, if all the buses are electrified under the GCC model, all the buses within BMTC will be owned by private operators. This could lead to a power grab where the private operators will be able to dictate the terms and conditions in future

– Shaheen Shasa of Bengaluru Bus Prayanikara Vedike

World is her family

Bengaluru girl's workshops saving children from brink of death in Ghana

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Bengaluru girl Radhe Shantha Kumar is creating a significant change, miles away from home in Ghana. She leads 'Save a Child's Life' workshops which provide crucial paediatric first aid training to students, teachers, parents, and child carers, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to respond effectively if a child is unconscious, bleeding, choking, or facing other medical emergencies. Radhe's initiative aims to bridge gaps in health and education in underserved areas of Ghana.

Having graduated from Bengaluru's Bishop Cotton Girls School and the University of St Andrews in the UK, Radhe arrived in Ghana on July 11 to lead these workshops. She actively engages with schools, nursing centres, and organisations to discuss and organise the paediatric first aid training.

"Typically starting at 8 am, each workshop lasts for an hour, and multiple sessions are conducted in a day to cover the entire school. The workshops involve live demonstrations and hypothetical first aid

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3 THINGS TO DO

01 Beats and steps

Grab the chance to attend an evening of Odissi dance at Malleswaram. Nrityantar Academy of Performing Arts, Bengaluru, and Dr Usha RK, former Cultural Director of the Embassy of India in Moscow, are presenting 'Ashtakam'. The event is based on the eight-stanza compositions of Adi Shankaracharya Bhagawatpada. Entry is free for the audience. **Where: Seva Sadan When: Wednesday, August 2; 6 pm**

02 Birding time

ActionAid is organising a bird walk, which is expected to last approximately 2 hours. The objective of this refreshing walk is to create awareness among children, youth, and others in the locality and encourage them to participate in the protection and conservation of the water body. **Where: Dore Kere, BHCS Layout, 2nd Stage, Uttarahalli Hobli; When: Today; 8 am; contact- 9901728880**

03 Fun and facts

Get ready to attend The Great Indian Science Fest, happening this month in Whitefield. The fest is set to ignite a spark of curiosity among science enthusiasts. You can have fun with scientific wonders and experiments and learn about discoveries. You can also dive into workshops. **Where: Nexus Whitefield Mall When: Today; 1 pm to 8 pm**

Travel time
Pilgrims leave for Kashi from Yeshwanthpur Railway Station under the Karnataka Bharat Gaurav programme, inaugurated by minister Ramalinga Reddy on Saturday in Bengaluru

When sniffles follow...

City doctors stress on diseases becoming prevalent during monsoon; advise those with weak immune systems to take several measures

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As the monsoon is here, it is essential to recognise the concerns it brings, particularly for those with weak immune systems, including the elderly and individuals with comorbidities.

Dr Subrata Das, Senior Consultant, Internal Medicine and Diabetology at Sakra World Hospital, explains, "The monsoon season emerges with dancing rains from the heavens, accompanied by a symphony of drenching rain and oppressive humidity. However, individuals with weak immune systems face the vulnerability of watery illnesses and the hidden threat of invisible enemies lurking in nature's pageant."

During the monsoon season, certain diseases become more prevalent. Dr Das highlights, "On average, we witness 3–4 daily cases of dengue during the monsoon, underscoring the heightened risk of illnesses during this period. Diarrhoea, cholera, and typhoid find their way into our lives through contaminated water. Mosquitoes become carriers of diseases like dengue, malaria, and chikungunya, taking advantage of stagnant waters. Additionally, allergies induced by the petrichor in the air further compromise our immune system. The monsoon season, mesmerising yet menacing, urges us to fortify our immune defences and navigate its perils with caution."

Dr Anantha Padmanabha, Consultant in Internal Medicine at Fortis Hospital, Nagarbhavi, emphasises the need for preventive measures, stating, "Waterborne diseases transmitted through the faecal-oral route, such as hepatitis A, pose a significant risk. Similarly, consuming unhygienic roadside foods like panipuri or fried rice can lead to typhoid fever. It is crucial to prevent these vector-borne and waterborne diseases. Additionally, the risk of catching a cold or cough, particularly the H1N1 flu virus, should be considered."

Experts say that diarrhoea, cholera, and typhoid find their way into our lives through contaminated water

Common monsoon diseases

Dengue, viral fever and typhoid Common symptoms:
- Weakness and nausea
- Body ache
- Headache
- High fever

Precautions: For viral
- Use a mask and sanitize hands regularly
- Maintain social distancing

For dengue
- Do not allow water to accumulate
- Drain out water from plant and flower pots
- Do not store fresh water in open containers

For typhoid
- Ensure safe drinking water
- Consume hygienic food

For skin diseases
- Keep yourself dry
- Avoid wearing unwashed clothes
- Use disinfectant in water while bathing
- Take a bath twice a day, if possible

He explains that to prevent serious infections, especially for immunocompromised patients, it is advisable to avoid crowded places, cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing, and maintain social distance. Vaccination against the flu virus is highly recommended.

Furthermore, he suggests considering specific vaccines for typhoid and hepatitis A, especially for children.

Dr Das advises individuals with decreased immunity due to certain conditions to take extra precautions, stating, "Stay hydrated with clean, filtered water, practise impeccable hygiene by regular handwashing, and maintain clean and dry surroundings. Strengthen your immune system with a wholesome diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Incorporate immune-boosting foods like yoghurt, garlic, ginger, and citrus fruits."

> **"Waterborne diseases transmitted through the faecal-oral route, such as hepatitis A, pose a significant risk**
> – Dr Anantha Padmanabha

During the monsoon, individuals with weak immunity, such as the elderly, diabetics, and those on steroids, face a higher risk of illnesses like the flu. Asthma sufferers are also more susceptible. To prevent diseases like typhoid and diarrhoea, it is important to drink clean water, and maintain clean and dry surroundings.

Who's an ideal registrar?

Govt seems to be wavering on decision to appoint bureaucrats as registrars in universities; educationists are back in the running

Officials note that the decision contradicts the earlier one

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Is the government yielding to pressure to appoint educationists as registrars? Well, it is not entirely clear so far. Previously, the government had taken a firm stance to appoint bureaucrats as registrars in universities to ensure transparency. However, in a few universities, educationists are now being appointed for the role.

Officials in the higher education department note that this contradicts the earlier decision to appoint bureaucrats. Recently, Kuvempu University in Shivamogga experienced a flip-flop when the government initially appointed a KAS officer as registrar, but within nine days, the order was revised, and a professor was appointed instead. Sources suggest that similar changes might occur in other universities with vacant posts.

Higher Education Minister Dr MC Sudhakar explained, "We had indeed appointed a KAS officer. However, as the KAS officer refused the job, we had to appoint a professor."

In the past, experienced educationists were commonly appointed as registrars (administration) and registrars (evaluation). However, to enhance transparency, the Karnataka State Universities Act was amended to mandate bureaucrats for the position of registrar (administration). If IAS officers were unavailable, KAS officers would be appointed. Recently, due to vacancies, senior KAS officers were appointed as registrars in some universities. Sources indicate that there is intense lobbying for the positions of vice-chancellor and registrar (administration).

In fact, for long, experts have urged the State Government and the Higher Education Department to appoint Indian Administrative Service (IAS) or Karnataka Administrative Service (KAS) officers for the posts of Registrar-Administrative and Registrar-Evaluation. This rule has been a part of the Karnataka State Universities Bill for a long time, but the State Government has been appointing senior professors of the universities as registrars instead.

> **We had indeed appointed a KAS officer. However, as the KAS officer refused the job, we had to appoint a professor**
>
> –Dr MC Sudhakar, Higer Education Minister

"In the Common Universities Act, it was clearly mentioned that the Registrar post will be replaced with IAS or KAS officers. The Registrar Evaluation post has been converted to 'Controller of Examination,' allowing the appointment of senior professors," said an expert. The expert emphasised on the need for all Registrars-Administration and Evaluation to be IAS and KAS officers, as some professors may not be suitable for administrative or examination duties and might get appointed based on political backing or seniority lists.

However, some members of the academia disagree with this view. A former registrar of a State-run university questioned the necessity of having only bureaucrats for the position, asserting that professors are also capable of handling university administration. The provision for appointing KAS officers exists, but having senior professors is not inherently wrong or incompetent, he said.

Another registrar at a State-run university expressed support for appointing KAS officers, saying the burden faced in the position, which often hinders academic work.

Drone over Vidhana Soudha: 2 in dock

The Vidhana Soudha police have registered an FIR against two event management executives who tried to fly a drone near the east gate of the Vidhana Soudha at around 6:45 am. The youths have been booked for trespassing and negligence. The accused have been identified as Arun and Vinod.

The police investigation revealed that they tried to fly the drone without knowing that it was prohibited to do so. They had come to shoot a video of a private company's 15-year celebration. **–BMB**

Bengaluru FC signs Ryan Williams

Indian Super League (ISL) side Bengaluru FC on Friday confirmed that they have signed attacker Ryan Williams on a one-year deal with a further option to extend.

He previously represented A-League side Perth Glory FC during the 2022-23 season and scored four goals and provided two assists in 24 games, as per ISL.

Williams began his youth career with ECU Joondalup before joining Portsmouth FC in 2010. He began his senior professional career with Fulham FC and was later loaned out to Gillingham, Barnsley and Oxford United. He joined Barnsley on a permanent move in 2015 and after two seasons, he moved to Rotherham United. He made a return to Portsmouth FC in 2019 and then left for Oxford United in 2021 Williams has represented Australia at Under-20 and Under-23 levels. He earned his first senior cap for the Socceroos in 2019, making his debut in a friendly against South Korea as a substitute. Williams' twin brother, Aryn has had a taste of Indian football already. **–ANI**

Traffic changes spark outcry in Koramangala

More vehicles, smaller roads lead to unbearable noise pollution and safety risks

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Locals face difficulties as countless vehicles are now parked helter-skelter on narrow stretches

Changes made in traffic movement at Sony World Junction a little over a month ago have left residents of Koramangala 6th block high and dry. Residents say there has been a multifold increase in the number of vehicles using smaller roads in residential areas, leading to unbearable noise pollution for a large part of the day. A senior citizen living on 18th Main Road says relentless honking due to high traffic has become a common occurrence, causing a great deal of inconvenience to the residents.

"Traffic flow starts from 7.30 am and continues till 11 pm. Before the new rule came into effect, there used to be no honking in the area as the roads were relatively free. With the surge in the number of vehicles, it has become a terrible place to live. Ours is a corner house, and we are at our wit's end," said the elderly, who is suffering from health ailments and finding the increase in traffic a bit much.

Citizens say their ordeal started over a month ago when the city traffic police decided to close the right turn at the Sony World signal towards the 80 feet Road from Indiranagar. Vehicles since then have been taking a U-turn at Ooty Chocolate junction and entering narrow stretches of the 6th block in Koramangala.

Residents allege this has created a dangerous environment for many senior citizens who use these roads for morning walks. "I live on 17th D Main, and the road is hardly 30 feet wide. However, after the new traffic rule at Sony World Junction, even BMTC buses and heavy vehicles are entering the narrow lanes of residential areas to get on the 80 feet road. In case we need to cross the road, we have to wait for a long time as vehicles are plying perpetually.

Many elderly people use these roads for morning walks. However, with choke-a-block traffic that starts early morning, it has become a dangerous proposition," said a member of Koramangala 6th Block Resident Welfare Association.

> **"There used to be no honking, as the roads were relatively free. With the surge in vehicles, it has become terrible** – Resident

Locals say countless vehicles are now parked helter-skelter on narrow stretches, and residents are facing nightmares in taking out their vehicles when in need.

"We do not understand the rationale behind this rule. It has only created problems for hundreds of residents living in the area. Taking out our vehicles has also become difficult as random vehicles are parked in front of our exit gates," said Roy Varghese, a resident.

According to traffic police officials, this tweak in traffic flow has improved the travel time of people who are coming to Koramangala from HSR layout. The outcome of the experiment has been positive, and BTP plans to continue with this change.

'Lack of resources causes kids to suffer terribly'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

scenarios, encouraging active participation from students and teachers. So far, we have successfully trained 1,673 people in both urban and rural regions of Ghana. We share knowledge with students, parents, teachers, and caregivers, empowering them with the confidence to handle various medical emergencies children might encounter, such as unconsciousness, breathing difficulties, bleeding, choking, poisoning, burns, and minor injuries," she said.

She said that during the workshops held in rural areas, they witnessed the urgent need for first aid and medical support, as parents approached her with issues like severe infections or mental health conditions. "These encounters have deeply touched me, highlighting the lack of proper support and underscoring the importance of my training initiatives," she said.

She recalled the challenging days

"As we were walking through the rural areas, several patients approached me with sick children who had high fever or infected wounds, continuous vomiting, polio, hernia, etc. A parent saw my white coat and came running, seeking medical help

with her child on her hip. Her child had a severely infected leg with pus and severe damage to the skin and soft tissue. I worked with a nurse here, Sister Maria, to help them out. When we asked them what happened, they said they didn't have money to go to the health clinic, and there were no free clinics available in their village, so the mother was unable to get her child treated," she said.

Had she left the child untreated, the infection could have spread throughout the leg, leading to amputation and potentially sepsis, which would be very critical for the child's life as sepsis is deadly.

"This was emotionally quite challenging for me as it meant that the lack of resources and proper first aid knowledge in rural areas can cause children to suffer terribly."

The 'Save a Child's Life' project is funded by the Laidlaw Foundation, with support of two other NGOs. Radhe was selected as a scholar by the foundation for her academic excellence and motivation to create a positive impact on society. Her organisation's focus lies in bridging gaps in health and education in areas that lack sufficient resources. Asabir Foundation is offering local support during Radhe's stay in Ghana.

"The importance of this training is evident, as millions of children face medical emergencies every year without people around them having the necessary skills to provide timely assistance. Tragically, accidents like choking have resulted in the loss of children's lives due to inadequate responses," she said.

One of Radhe's partners, Millies Trust, was established after the founders lost their daughter in a choking accident, inspiring them to educate others on child care. "My motivation is to empower individuals with the knowledge and confidence to potentially save a child's life in critical situations," she added.

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Footpath peril

K R Puram

Bikers endanger pedestrians on the newly formed footpath at K R Puram Hanging Bridge.

Garbage crisis

Marathalli

Garbage pileup and unhygienic conditions on New Horizon College Road raise concerns.

Ineffective boards

Malleswaram

No Parking boards in Malleswaram prove ineffective resulting in parking violations on 6th cross.

Hanging on a wire

Don't go near transformers, don't touch wires: BESCOM's cautionary note to citizens

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Don't be surprised if you spot Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (BESCOM) personnel going around the streets, announcing to people to be careful about not going near transformers or touching wires. During the rainy season in the city, there is an increased risk of electrocution, prompting BESCOM personnel to take precautionary measures.

BESCOM MD Mahantesh Bilagi stressed the importance of safety, stating, "Don't touch transformers or wires. When there is rainfall, people should be careful not to go near or touch electric wires and poles; it could lead to electrocution. Hence, as we don't want this to happen, we have taken up a regular campaign."

An official said that to ensure public safety during the monsoon, BESCOM officials are even reaching out to schools to educate students and their families on how to safeguard themselves. "We are advising residents to avoid going close to any electricity poles or lines that may be in dangerous conditions and to immediately call BESCOM's 24x7 helpline (1912) if they come across any issues," they added.

"We are advising residents to avoid going close to any electricity poles or lines that may be in dangerous conditions and to immediately call BESCOM's 24x7 helpline (1912) if they come across any issues

Apart from power outage alerts, BESCOM vans are also deployed to specific areas during maintenance or transformer repair work, which may result in long power cuts.

An official from BESCOM said that over the past two years, they have employed BESCOM vans to proactively inform residents in specific areas about power outages.

"This initiative was especially crucial during the challenging period of the covid-19 pandemic, when many people were working from home. Unlike traditional office setups, numerous households lacked power backup systems, making them vulnerable to prolonged power disruptions. During this time, BESCOM had to conduct maintenance and transformer repair work in certain areas, which could result in extended power cuts," they explained.

Live wires turn super dangerous during monsoon; **Inset:** BESCOM personnel using a megaphone asking residents to be careful

To minimise inconvenience and keep the public informed, the BESCOM vans were deployed with microphones to reach out to households and businesses directly. The announcements made through the microphones served as timely alerts, enabling residents to plan their work and daily activities accordingly.

The need for such proactive communication was vital, as prolonged power cuts could have severe implications for individuals working from home, hindering their productivity and affecting their overall work plan. Through these efforts, BESCOM aimed to bridge the communication gap, they informed.

However, some residents have expressed dissatisfaction with BESCOM's monsoon preparedness. They believe it is the duty of BESCOM personnel to clear branches hovering around electric lines to prevent power supply disruptions during heavy rainfall or winds.

One resident from Bhuvaneswari Nagar shared his experience, stating, "When I requested them to clear a few branches of honge trees, the personnel said it was not possible for him to do so. This selective approach doesn't work."

Safety for jumbos

Meanwhile, BESCOM officials said that they are working on replacing existing bare overhead lines that cross over elephant habitats with covered conductor/LT AB cable in various locations.

This initiative aims to create a safe corridor for elephants and other animals, demonstrating BESCOM's commitment to both public safety and wildlife conservation.

Our safety in our hands?

Pvt firms stepping in on demand for citizens' specific requirements of security

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With daily incidents of mugging and burglary in the city, citizens have now started using private patrolling agents to ensure their own safety.

According to the latest data by the Karnataka state police, Bengaluru recorded 3,322 cases of theft in the first five months of 2023.

In May alone, the city recorded 754 cases of theft, 38 cases of robbery, 27 cases of burglary at day and 27 cases of burglary at night.

These increasing cases have led citizens to now hire private patrolling services for their residence. Vinod Jacob, of Namma Bengaluru Foundation, says, "The main task of maintaining law and order is of the police, but anything that is helping the police in terms of technology, is welcome. The use of technology by a private player is helping the citizens because when you look at the projects launched by the government, they put up cameras, but who is monitoring them? The same thing happened with Nirbhaya fund as well, how many of those cameras are actually working? There is a difference in government and private players when it comes to technology and that is where startups have come in."

56 Secure, a company that claims to be India's first security subscription company, has taken over the city with it's patrolling 'guards' on the road. They have also employed 200+ safety agents who work around the clock and till day have successfully resolved over 5,000 SOS incidents. They run a 24-hour command centre that monitors, tracks, and reviews safety agents' tasks and locations across 60+ pin codes in the city.

"The difference between police and us is that we are an app-based service so whatever we do is largely triggered by an app. Police's core focus is on public law and order and protection of constitutional requirements from the security apparatus and that is where most of their focus will go in. Given the citizen to police ratio that we have, it is heavily skewed where there are 100,000 citizens to 40 policemen. So, a private security app and police are totally different functions where the police's focus is to maintain law and order and our focus is to ensure the safety, security and other aspects a private citizen may require to protect themselves or their families for which they cannot rely on the police. For example, guarding their vehicle and providing specific protection for elders of the family," Sacheth Kadam, Co-Founder of 56 Secure told BM. These agents are trained on how to go from property to property and check specific things as requested by customers.

"We have had multiple instances of them doing so. But if there is a similar pattern where a person is moving around the same area or miscreants out there, the agents are always informed," added Kadam.

No integration with BDA, other issues with Kaveri 2.0

As Kaveri 2.0 is being hailed for its expedition of the process, there is still room for improvement. Users complain about the lack of BDA integration and issuance of Encumbrance Certificate (EC). Kaveri 2.0 that launched a few months ago for speedy property registration has some property buyers worried. While some are facing issues with the existing features, some want more to be added.

Property buyers complained of delay in sales owing to a lack of BDA integration. "I was trying to complete the sale application using BDA Khatha. The BDA issues an eight-digit PID. When I enter the PID in the sale application, the Kaveri platform is supposed to fetch owner details. Additionally, the platform is also supposed to provide more details regarding the property like the size of the site's left side and right side, different schedules of the property etc. However, when I enter the PID, I did not get any detail. I thought it is a bug on the platform. Further, I contacted the sub-registrar of Jayanager and they inform me that they will raise a ticket regarding this," said Sreenath, a Kaveri 2.0 user.

Sreenath said he also visited the office inspector general of registration to address the issue. "They also informed us that the platform is not capable of fetching the required information. If BDA is not integrated with Kavery, chances of duplicate registration are high. The unique PID is not being utilised to prevent such actions," he said.

According to him, if one enters the details manually and goes for registration, there is an issue with the Khatha transfer. As BDA does not have the required information they do not want to entertain as the new owner. Sreenath purchased a property this May after the rollout of Kaveri 2.0 and has paid the builder 80% of the amount. The buyer is insisting on completing the registration but due to the glitch in the platform, it is not getting completed. "Without BDA integration they should not have allowed Kaveri 2.0," he said.

Dhananjaya Padmanabhachar, sanchalak of Karnataka Home Buyers Forum said that this is not the only issue with the platform. "Officials have informed us that they are unable to complete the data migration from the previous version. They are unable to give the encumbrance certificate for the property. We do not know whether the government decided to skip all the testing before rolling out the new platform. BDA khatha is also not integrated with the new platform. ERC issued by BBMP to eliminate the khatha system also cannot be found. We are called the silicon city of India, but we are facing a lot of issues with the IT part of governance," Padmanabhachar said.

— Melvin Mathew

Heritage site in peril: GKVK tree-felling raises alarm

Trees have been cut, vegetation has been removed, leaving the soil exposed

Residents around the Gandhi Krishi Vigyana Kendra (GKVK) campus complain to the Karnataka Biodiversity Board (KBB) about tree-felling on the northwest side of the campus.

According to the complaint, numerous trees have been cut on the campus in recent days, and ground vegetation has been cleared, leaving the soil exposed.

"Over the last few weeks, innumerable trees have been felled bordering Purva Venezia apartment. The campus is home to hundreds of birds and animals, and is also a biodiversity heritage site. The area was one of the few untouched green spaces on the campus. Trees have been cut and vegetation has been removed," residents stated in the complaint.

KBB declared GKVK a biodiversity heritage site in 2010. The site spans 167 hectares and features a variety of agro and biotech research plots, nurturing flora and fauna. It is one of Bangalore's greenest areas.

Experts say certain trees on biodiversity heritage sites, exempted under the Karnataka Tree Act, may be felled following due procedure and consultation with the local Biodiversity Management Committee. However, they emphasize that ground shrubs should not be cleared and soil should not be exposed.

"As per the rules, any activities detrimental to the conservation of biodiversity of the heritage site should be prohibited. Moreover, while trees grown for commercial utilization under a pre-existing agreement with Karnataka State Forest Industries Corporation Limited (KSFIC) can be axed, care should be taken when it comes to subterranean cover. The lower vegetation cannot be harmed in the case of biodiversity heritage sites. If the lower vegetation has been removed and the soil is exposed, it is a matter of concern. GKVK is home to many endangered species including slender loris that are Schedule I animals and such activity might be detrimental to many endangered fauna," said a city-based biodiversity expert.

KBB officials stress that any such activity must be undertaken in consultation with the local BMC.

"GKVK has a BMC at the university level and the vice chancellor is the chairperson of that committee. Such activities should always be conducted after discussing them with the committee. Monetary benefits from such activities should be utilized by the local BMC for conservation purposes. KBB has written to GKVK seeking clarification on the same," said the official.

When BM contacted the concerned GKVK official, they expressed their inability to comment on the matter. – BMB

GKVK heritage site spans 167 hectares, features agro and biotech research plots, flora and fauna

> **"The campus is home to hundreds of birds and animals, and is also a biodiversity heritage site. The area was one of the few untouched green space on the campus**
>
> – Residents around GKVK

Minister pledges to Western Ghats preservation

Karnataka Environment and Forests Minister, Eshwar Khandre, affirmed the state's dedication to preserving and protecting the Western Ghats and its biosphere as recommended by the Kasturirangan Committee report. The report will be considered in consultation with neighbouring states and the Central government. A second committee, chaired by Sanjay Kumar, is expected to submit its report by December, guiding further government deliberation.

Addressing the audience at the Interspecies Conclave, hosted by Atria University in collaboration with Swissnex and the Federation of Karnataka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Minister Khandre highlighted the significance of safeguarding the interests of people residing in the 11 districts falling within Karnataka's major share of the Western Ghats.

"The Kasturirangan report came in 2013 and it has been under consideration since then. There are a lot of issues that need to be addressed. It involves 11 districts and the lives of lakhs of people. The Karnataka government is very serious about it (Kasturirangan report). We have been protecting biodiversity," he said.

Speaking about conservation, technology, and education, the Minister emphasized the need to introduce curricula from primary to degree levels, promoting biodiversity protection and awareness. He also highlighted the government's commitment to increasing tiger populations in the state and the importance of involving local forest committees, anganwadis, and school children in awareness campaigns.

During the event, Minister Khandre engaged with Jonathan Ledgard, founder of the Interspecies Money Group, who spoke on global environmental degradation and the use of technology to tackle conservation challenges. He commended Atria University for its efforts in highlighting technology's role in environmental conservation. – PTI

'Not against electrification, issue is with GCC model'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

There has been a staggering increase in ridership in the female passenger category alone -- of 168.57% between June 11 and July 28.

With the trend of increasing ridership, RTCs will have to add more buses to their fleet. With the RTCs moving to zero-emission transport, the question emerges as to what type of buses BMTCs should choose next. While the electric vehicle (EV) segment is currently the cleanest mode of transport, the procurement rates are on the higher end.

Tejas, an ardent commuter of buses, told BM that RTCs must rethink their priorities in terms of meeting ridership. "A shift in mode-share becomes difficult when it moves away from public transport. If there is a conundrum between going electric or increasing fleet size, the priorities need to be rechecked. The existing fleet of buses is inadequate for a smoother commuter experience. BMTC is still not providing service on many routes. Not everyone does not need to go to Shivajinagar or Majestic. I would love to get routes from Nagwara, Kalkere, and Babusapalya to areas like Koramangala and Indiranagar which have a lot of educational institutions. BMTC should consider setting up routes according to the changing travel patterns of the city."

He also added that the Shakthi scheme's insistence on ID proof is denying the service to the transgender community.

As of now, BMTC has 390 EVs and 1,454 non-EVs. In 2021-2022, BMTC added 565 BS VI buses and 90 (9m buses). In 2022-2023, BMTC added 238 BS VI buses and 300 (12m buses).

Bus activists feel that the move towards electrification is appreciable, but BMTC must avoid the Gross Cost Contract (GCC) model which leans towards losing public transport in the hands of private companies. "BMTC is procuring buses utilising the funds provided by the central government. We are not against electrification but there are problems with the GCC model. We are disproportionately focusing on electrification as a means to reduce pollution. Reducing private vehicle usage is another way to reduce pollution. To enable a mass shift from private vehicles, we need to increase buses. City commuters need different kinds of buses and not all can be addressed with EV buses," said Shaheen Shasa of Bengaluru Bus Prayanikara Vedike.

She added that the electrification of buses is wrought with the GCC model. "Under the GCC model, the operators are paying their drivers less than BMTC drivers. The subsidy is forcing the BMTC to go with the GCC model. The model supports the bus manufacturing industry rather than addressing the transport woes of commuters. In another word, the push for electrification is a push for the GCC model. Eventually, if all the buses are electrified under the GCC model, all the buses within BMTC will be owned by private operators. This could lead to a power grab where the private operators will be able to dictate the terms and conditions in future, " she added.

With the increasing ridership, RTCs will have to add more buses

THE SUNDAY READ

Fatal attraction

Loan apps turn out to be major worry for cops, families

On July 12, Tejas, a topper studying for the sixth semester in mechanical engineering at the Nitte Meenakshi Institute of Technology in Bengaluru, ended his life for not being able to take harassment by the staff of a loan app company.

Tejas had taken a loan of Rs 40,000 for his friend Mahesh a year ago from a loan app. But he was not able to repay the loan and EMI. The loan app had exerted pressure and allegedly harassed him demanding repayment.

In his suicide note, he wrote: "Father and mother please pardon me. There is no way out for me. I am not able to repay the loans and decided to end my life. Thanks, good bye." Jalahalli police have taken up the investigation.

June 3, 2023: Karnataka Police had arrested a girl student and two of her friends on charges of attempting to snatch a gold chain to pay up a loan amount of Rs 5,000 in Bengaluru. The accused confessed that she resorted to the crime as she was not able to take the torture from a loan app asking her to repay the pending amount.

The accused had invested Rs 15,000 on an online trading app. They made profits initially and later suffered losses. They got a Rs 15,000 loan from a loan app for investing in online trade. They had returned Rs 10,000 and took to crime to return the remaining Rs 5,000.

The girl, in the garb of being an NGO member, tried to snatch the gold chain of an aged lady in the pretext of giving a pamphlet. When the aged lady screamed for help, she ran away from the spot. After the police nabbed her, the elderly lady listening to their story decided to take back her complaint.

November 26, 2021: Police busted a racket run by Chinese nationals involved in lending out loans for exorbitant interests and harassing and humiliating customers in violation of laws in Bengaluru. The investigation revealed that these Chinese nationals opened bank accounts in the name of Indians and carried out fraudulent transactions and transferred crores of money to China.

The probe revealed 52 companies were registered and bank accounts were opened in private banks. The interest paid by borrowers was credited to those account numbers. As per preliminary investigation, crores of rupees have been sent to China through online transfers from these accounts.

The police sources say that though they are trying to deal with the loan apps who violate laws and exploit customers through the Karnataka Money Lenders Act, IT Act, Karnataka Prohibition of Charging Exorbitant Interest Act, the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Act, the decisive action should come jointly from state and the Central government.

The Legislature had discussed the menace of loan apps in the state in detail in the recently concluded session. The Congress government had also announced that the action will be initiated against 42 loan apps indulged in torturing people. BJP MLC DS Arun had raised the issue in the Council and stated that online gaming, online loan apps are torturing people. In particular, the gaming applications and online loan apps are destroying the lives of youths and students. He raised a concern on celebrities promoting such apps.

Arun had stated that about 800 such apps are functioning. Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao had stated that the problem was being discussed with the Central government and Google. Already 42 such apps have been removed from the Android Play Store. Many steps have been initiated against such apps. Since the Centre is controlling and monitoring the apps, it is not possible for the state government alone to take action. The matter will be discussed with the Centre by the state government, he added.

Retired ACP and politician, Lokeshwara told IANS that nowhere in Karnataka he had seen local police taking serious note of such cases and serious efforts are put into track the people involved in the loan app fraud. "Monitoring should be done at the bottom level and chain link schemes, apps must be monitored in the jurisdiction of police stations. The complaints in this regard are piling up with the cyber crime police and they can't do much about it as resources are limited. The accused sit in an unknown location and manage everything on the phone. They won't be tracked. The jurisdictional police have the power to deal with such cases and they have to be given focus and responsibility in this regard," he said.

Experts suggest monitoring of the apps and schemes can be done at police stations as complaints in this regard are piling up with the cyber crime police and they can't do much about it as resources are limited

Lokeshwara further stated that the Hyderabad police are well equipped and provided with the necessary technical support by the government. "They are chasing well and they got a very good team and made significant arrests in this regard. Likewise, in Karnataka as well, the fraudulent loan apps could be reined in." —IANS

Chinese whispers

Chinese criminal syndicates and gangs are running scam operations in India and several such digital loan shark cases have been detected in the recent past and it is suspected that the scale of such illegal activities has only increased over time. Chinese scammers are exploiting the loopholes in the legal system in the host countries, often hooking the unemployed youth and financially stressed lower strata of the society, who become easy prey for such gangs.

Investigators found that most of the kingpins are operating from China but they employ locals in neighbouring countries to run their wider transnational criminal activities which includes also to collect data and dent the Indian economy.

Pavan Duggal, Chairman of the International Commission on Cyber Security Law, stated that Chinese loan apps are significantly impacting the Indian economy as part of a broader approach. "China aims to target the Indian economy due to their past relationship with the nation. As a result, China is actively working to destabilise the Indian economy and gather as much data as possible through these loan apps."

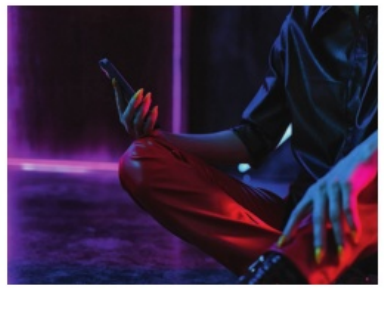
He also pointed out that these apps offer instant loans with high-interest rates, leading people into financial distress. While many Chinese apps fall under the IT Act of 2000, they do not comply with Indian law, causing significant financial losses in crores to Indian citizens.

He also stressed the need for dedicated cybercrime courts, as existing courts are overwhelmed with criminal prosecutions. Duggal also highlighted the necessity for new legal frameworks to address the misuse of emerging technologies for criminal purposes.

"Unfortunately, India is not fully prepared to handle this surge in cybercrime, especially with cybercriminals leveraging emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence and tools like ChatGPT for their malicious activities," he said.

Regarding cybercrime laws, Duggal pointed out three crucial issues. First, there is currently no dedicated law specifically addressing cybercrime. Second, certain cybercrimes are covered under the Information Technology Act 2000 and the Indian Penal Code, but not comprehensively. And thirdly, the existing laws are inadequate in effectively responding to cybercrimes, posing significant challenges in combating them.

—IANS



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STORYBEHINDTHEPHOTO

PRIMATE COUSIN

A bored gray langoor in Hampi doing callisthenics

The picture was clicked by BM reader **T Prakash**

If you have a picture and a story to share, send us the picture with your name and number at **mybangaloremirror@timesgroup.com**

B'luru-Mysuru Highway: Not so scientifically built?

CM Siddaramaiah to meet Union Minister Nitin Gadkari; state proposes ₹150.81 crore for improving service road

File photo of Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway

The CM said that after the expressway was opened, speed detectors were not installed. And the maximum accidents took place in June

With accidents on the rise on the Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said on Saturday he would meet Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari and point out the flaws on the expressway and changes to be made.

Speaking to reporters after inspecting accident-prone areas of the expressway near Mandya, Siddaramaiah accused the BJP government of inaugurating it in a hurry, ignoring the flaws that were resulting in accidents.

"I am going to Delhi and will meet Gadkari and ask him to rectify things (on the expressway). A proposal for Rs 150.81 crore has been sent to the Centre for improving the service road," the Chief Minister said.

According to him, the work will start in November this year.

In response to a question on the alleged toll collection going on at those stretches, which are still incomplete, the Chief Minister said the state government had no role to play as it is being done by the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI).

"We are not collecting tolls, but I will speak to them," the Chief Minister said. Regarding accidents, he said Chief Secretary Vandita Sharma had a meeting with the NHAI officials.

Siddaramaiah said that after the expressway was opened, speed detectors were not installed. Since there was no guard, many accidents took place.

"Maximum accidents took place in June—26 accidents. This month, only five have taken place," the Chief Minister said. Though Siddaramaiah declined to call the project unscientific, he said more safety measures were required. – PTI

DID YOU KNOW?

Indian actor Sanjay Khan was born in Bengaluru on January 3, 1941. He is known to have starred in various hit Bollywood movies like Mela, Dus Lakh, Intaquam, Ek Phool Do Mali, and more. Actor Feroz Khan was his elder brother, with whom he shared screens in movies like Nagin and Upaasna. He also directed the popular drama series, The Sword of Tipu Sultan. Later, he also directed and produced TV series like Jai Hanuman, 1857 Kranti, and more. His youngest daughter is Sussanne Khan, who was formerly married to Bollywood actor Hrithik Roshan.

GET HEARD WITH MIRROR

9591233247

Let's see how much you know about Namma Bengaluru, folks. Tell us something incredible and mind-boggling about this beautiful city and our editors and researchers will check it out. If it's credible, we'll give it a shout-out, with your name and picture.

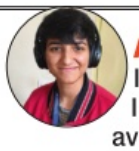
TAPTHECHATTER

where Bengalureans speak their mind

Tell us about your one traffic nightmare experience in the city.

Sridhar Comaravalli, BM Reader
Some years ago, my wife and I were stuck inside our cab just near the City Railway Station due to a massive traffic jam. On reaching, we ran with our bags and just managed to enter our coach before the train started seconds later.

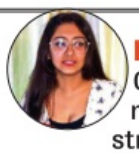
Sarthak Mehta, BM Reader
My worst traffic nightmare was during the heavy monsoon rains. The streets were flooded, and the traffic signals were out of order. The chaos was indescribable, and I saw several vehicles getting stuck in waterlogged areas.



Ananya Zharotia, BM Reader
I once had to catch a flight, and I left my home well in advance to avoid any delays. But fate had other plans. A major accident on the highway brought traffic to a complete halt. I missed my flight, and it was a stressful experience.

Aryan Singh, BM Reader
There was this one time when I had a medical emergency in the family. I rushed to the hospital, but the traffic was unbearable. Every minute felt like an hour, and I was praying to reach the hospital in time. It was terrifying to be stuck.

Sidak Puri, BM Reader
I once had to attend a job interview, and I left my house super early to ensure I'd be on time. But, I got stuck in a jam caused by a broken-down truck. I reached the interview sweaty, and needless to say, I didn't get the job.



Dhriti Duggal, BM Reader
One day, heavy rains flooded the roads, and the traffic police were struggling to manage the situation. It was mayhem on the streets, and I saw vehicles stuck in the water everywhere. I had to abandon my plan and return home.

SPEAK TO US

How would you describe Bengaluru's weather these days?

If you want to be featured in this section, mail us your answer to this question, in 25 words, with 'Tap The Chatter' in the subject line. Mail us with your name, occupation & a picture at mybangaloremirror@timesgroup.com or WhatsApp us on 9591233247

The X factor

Why Dunkin' and Lego rebrands succeeded — but X missed the mark

Twitter has swapped the fluffy bird that used to symbolise the social media platform for a spindly black X.

Ditching the company's well-known logo and changing its name to a letter often associated with danger, death and the unknown is only the latest user-aggravating step CEO Elon Musk has taken since he bought Twitter in October 2022 for USD 44 billion.

But it's the most visually jarring one.

The reaction has mainly been a mix of ambivalence, ridicule and scorn. For the most part, longtime Twitter users are unhappy at what they perceived as another unnecessary change that's eroding their enthusiasm for the social media platform.

It's hard to find anybody praising the change so far, except perhaps some of Elon Musk's most devoted fans. Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey signalled that he was finding the uproar overblown.

I'm paying close attention to this corporate pivot because I'm a scholar of design who researches social media and brand campaigns. Logos and brand names change all the time and rarely cause such commotion. But because these changes go deeper than most, I believe the risks of damage to the company are greater.

Workers install lighting on an 'X' sign atop the company headquarters, formerly known as Twitter, in downtown San Francisco, on Friday

X's clumsy design

X might strike you as a weird brand name, and the change may seem to have happened out of the blue, but Musk has long been smitten with the letter.

In 2000, the founders of PayPal ousted him as CEO for trying to change its name to "X," his Tesla models are famously named S, 3, X and Y – which displayed together basically spell out the word "SEXY," and one of his many children is named X on his birth certificate.

I would describe the new logo, submitted by a Twitter user, as a white-on-black, sans-serif X consisting of two strokes. It's minimal and modern – and a stark departure from Twitter's iconic blue-and-white bird. That shade of blue makes you feel calm and serene; black conveys sophistication and mystery. And yet even people who know nothing about design are poking fun at the logo's simplicity and unprofessional execution. To me, the logo looks suitable for a metaverse strip club or a dating app for robots.

Facebook's Meta journey

Oddball branding is hardly unusual for a big tech company.

When Facebook rebranded itself as Meta in 2021, it was part of a comprehensive, strategic and long-term plan. The transformation signified the company's aspiration to shift from a social media platform to an enterprise focused on the metaverse. While the goal of a vibrant metaverse remains more theoretical than imminent, the rebranding still gave Meta some momentum as it now seeks to shift its focus to artificial intelligence.

Perhaps that openness to trying new things explains why the rollout of Threads, Meta's new competitor for the social media platform formerly known as Twitter, is apparently off to a strong start.

From dunking to Dunkin' and rebuilding Lego's brand

When Dunkin' Donuts trimmed its name to Dunkin' in 2018, the reception was mostly positive. Its customers seemed to get that the company wanted to move away from being closely associated with donuts – a high-calorie pastry with little nutritional value – and toward becoming a "beverage-led, on-the-go brand."

That rebrand succeeded, and the company has also stuck with the slogan it adopted a dozen years earlier: "America runs on Dunkin'."

Lego had another rebranding effort that business school students learn about as a model. Lego was profitable, popular and beloved for the entire 20th century, but around 2003 its sales began to wane. Presumably, kids had too many other toys and digital devices to play with and simply didn't have the time for the plastic blocks anymore. Undeterred, Lego conducted market, ethnographic and psychological research to better understand how people in general, and children in particular, play with its wares. The company's management realised that Lego products can be tied to just about anything.

So the company began to partner with "Star Wars," Nintendo, "Jurassic Park" and other brands to market special Lego sets. It also released a movie in 2014 that grossed nearly USD 500 million – boosting Lego sales and profits.

Ultimate fate of X

I doubt the X rebrand will succeed – and not just because I dislike the new name and logo. There are some challenging legal issues with naming a major company a letter of the alphabet. The letter X's use as a brand is already banned in certain countries because of its prevalence in pornography branding. And the rollout has been messy on the company's own website. Musk reportedly swiped the @x handle from its original user without offering any compensation. What's more, many users had already left the platform because of technical glitches and increased hate speech; the switch to X could make them less likely to come back and won't make others more eager to stick around.

In Musk's quest to create what he says will become an app that "does everything," I believe his X rebrand took Twitter one more step toward being good for hardly anything.

(By Matthew Pittman, University of Tennessee, The Conversation)

You need 15 mn impressions, 500 followers to earn money on Musk's X

As Elon Musk rolled out its ads revenue programme for creators globally including in India, one needs to be subscribed to X Blue (earlier Twitter Blue), have at least 15 million impressions on cumulative posts within the last three months and at least 500 followers.

For eligible creators who set up their payout details, you will receive a payment the week of July 31 if you meet the criteria and your payout amount exceeds the minimum threshold of $50, the company said in an update.

"We want the process to be as simple as possible, so all eligible X Blue and Verified Organisations subscribers are entitled to revenue share so long as they meet the eligibility criteria and join," said the rebranded Twitter.

"You'll get payouts as long as X determines that you've generated more than $50. The support document about the programme doesn't specify how the company determines the value of its payouts," it added.

Creators will be able to set up Ads Revenue Sharing and Creator Subscriptions independently. What a user needs once eligible is a Stripe account for payouts. While all eligible users may choose to participate, "if you are found to breach the Ads Revenue Share Terms, which include, for example, Creator Monetization Standards and the X Rules, you may be excluded from the programme," warned the Musk company.

X said that it may modify or cancel the programme at any time, including for business, financial, or legal reasons. **-IANS**

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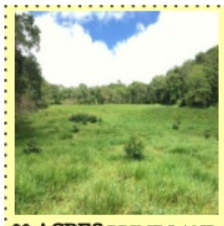

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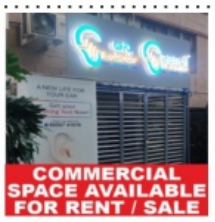

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Countdown begins
The countdown for the launch of seven Singaporean satellites, onboard a PSLV rocket in a commercial mission, commenced here on Saturday, ISRO said

BangaloreMirror 12
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Fierce encounter between security forces, Naxalites

#SUKMA

A fierce gunbattle took place between security personnel and Naxalites in Sukma district in Chhattisgarh on Saturday, with officials saying at least four to six ultras were either killed or injured though no bodies have been found at the site.

Naxalites managed to drag those injured or killed into the forests, these officials said.

The encounter broke out this morning in the forest of village Chhotekedwal, located in a Maoist stronghold on the border of Chintagufa and Kistaram police station limits, when security personnel were out on an anti-Naxalite operation, a police official said.

Personnel belonging to the state police's District Reserve Guard (DRG) and the elite Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) of the Central Reserve Police Force were involved in the operation, he said.

"The operation was launched based on inputs about the presence of Divisional Committee member and in charge of Kistaram area committee of Maoists Raju and in-charge of platoon number 8 Masa along with 30-35 cadres in Chhotekedwal, Badekedwal and Singhanmadgu villages to observe the outlawed movement's martyrs' week," he said.

The Naxalites opened fire on security personnel and faced retaliation, he said, adding that the one-hour gunbattle resulted in four to six ultras getting injured or killed.

"The ultras managed to drag the injured or dead into the forests. A search operation is underway in the area," the official said. Naxalites observe 'martyrs' week' from July 28 to August 3 to mark the deaths of their colleagues in action. **PTI**

Opposition bloc in Manipur: 'Try for peaceful solution'

MPs meet victims of conflict; BJP quick to brush off visit as 'mere show-off'

#IMPHAL

As a delegation of 21 MPs from the opposition bloc Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) reached Manipur's capital on Saturday to assess the ground situation in the ethnic strife-torn state, Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said the conflict in the northeastern state was sullying India's image, and all parties must try and find a peaceful solution to end it.

The BJP was quick to react to the visit by MPs of the opposition bloc with Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur alleging that it was a "mere show-off". The senior BJP leader alleged that when Manipur used to burn under previous governments, those visiting the northeastern state now did not utter a single word in Parliament then. "When Manipur used to remain shut for months, they had not spoken a word," he said.

Meanwhile, on the first day of their two-day whirlwind tour, the MPs visited several relief camps in Imphal, Moirang in Bishnupur district and Churachandpur and met victims of ethnic clashes.

"We have come here to meet victims of ethnic clashes and understand the problem. We want the end of violence and the restoration of peace at the earliest... the entire world is watching what is going on in Manipur," Chowdhury told PTI. He also said, "The ethnic clashes have damaged the image of Manipur, the northeast region and India as a whole. We all have to try for a peaceful solution. We are here not to do any politics."

Displaced people sit at Moirang College Relief Camp where MPs from the opposition bloc paid a visit, in Bishnupur on Saturday

The MPs reached Imphal by a commercial flight from Delhi.

After their arrival here, the delegation went to Churachandpur, where fresh violence has taken place, to meet victims from the Kuki community in the relief camps there.

"From Imphal, they took a chopper to Churachandpur due to security issues. As only one helicopter is available, the members of the delegation were divided into two teams, and the chopper made two trips to ferry them," an official said. One team, comprising Chowdhury, the Congress leader in the Lok Sabha, and others, departed for Churachandpur first to visit the relief camp set up at the Boys Hostel of Churachandpur College.

Another team, comprising Congress' deputy leader in the Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi and others, went to visit a relief camp at Don Bosco School in Churachandpur, a source in the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) said.

Asked about the BJP's allegations of politicisation of the Manipur issue, Gogoi said, "We would have been very happy to be a part of an all-party delegation led by the prime minister. But he is completely missing from the scene. He has not uttered a single word about Manipur in Parliament." Congress MP from Kerala, K Suresh, who is also part of the delegation, alleged that the Centre and the Manipur government have "badly handled" the situation. **-PTI**

India has 3,682 tigers, home to 75% of global numbers: Census

#NEW DELHI/RAMNAGAR (U'KHAND)

The number of tigers in India has increased from 2,967 in 2018 to 3,682 in 2022, an annual rise of 6 per cent, according to the latest government data released on the International Tiger Day on Saturday.

With this, India has become home to approximately 75 per cent of the world's tiger population, Union Minister of State for Forest, Environment and Climate Change Ashwini Kumar Choubey said in Ramnagar while releasing the data for 2022.

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the "Status of Tigers 2022" to mark the completion of 50 years of "Project Tiger" in April, the government had said there are at least 3167 tigers in India. Tiger census is held every four years in the country.

"There are a maximum of 3925 tigers in the country. The average number is 3,682," a senior official from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) said.

A child takes part in a campaign on International Tiger Day, in Bengaluru on Saturday

With a 50 per cent increase in the last four years, Madhya Pradesh has the maximum number (785) of tigers in the country, followed by Karnataka (563), Uttarakhand (560), and Maharashtra (444), according to the data.

In his message on the occasion, Union Minister of Forest, Environment and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav said, "India's exemplary efforts in tiger conservation and the increase in tiger numbers is not just a statistic but a testament to the determination and commitment of the nation.

"Under the ambit of tiger conservation, India has not only successfully safeguarded its tiger population, but also has secured the future of all life forms, truly in line with our philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutambakam'."

He also took to Twitter to congratulate Madhya Pradesh for the achievement.

"With 785 tigers as per the latest tiger estimation exercise, MP is the Leading Tiger State of India! This reflects MP's commitment to conserving tigers through intensive protection and monitoring by involving local communities," he said.

The number of tigers "within the tiger reserve" is highest in Corbett (260), followed by Bandipur (150), Nagarhole (141), Bandhavgarh (135), Dudhwa (135), Mudumalai(114), Kanha (105), Kaziranga (104), Sundarbans (100), Tadoba (97), Sathyamangalam (85), and Pench-MP (77). **-PTI**

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I, **Priti Tiwari,** r/at No. 715, 1st Floor, 1st Cross, C Block, 1st Main Road, AECS Layout, Kundalahalli, Bangalore 560037 have changed my name to **PRITI SHARMA** for all practical purposes vide affidavit dt. 29.07.2023 sworn before Notary **B M Chandrashekar, Bangalore.**

CHANGE OF NAME I, Smt RANJANA, D/o, S.R.Vijaya Shekar, aged 47, R@ Flat No. 004, Pradhan Wren, No.15/2, 8th Main, RPC Layout, Vijaynagar 2nd stage, Bangalore-104, hereby solemnly affirm that RANJANA, and RANJANA V. SHEKHARA both the names are pertaining to me only and now I have retained my name to RANJANA V. SHEKHARA from 28.11.2011, Vide revised affidavit dated 26.07.2023 sworn before Advocate & Notary Anitha Bai, Bengaluru

I, Thatikonda Vara Sai Nath Prasad S/o T B Poornachandra, R/o B 116, 1 st Floor, Ravoos Nandan Apartment, Belthur Main Road K Dommasandra, Bangalore -560067 I have changed my name from Tatikonda Vara Sai Nath Prasad to Thatikonda Vara Sai Nath Prasad, vide affadavit no IN-KA38815588856810V dated 26/7/2023 Bangalore

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HEALTH TIP: Don't put salt on the table but eat potassium-rich foods, such as bananas, avocados and salmon

TASTE OF PUNJAB

These simple, tasty recipes can take you to the land of five rivers

LAL SURKH CHICKEN TIKKA

A simple, home-style recipe for the classic Chicken Tikka which can be easily replicated in homes, not using any artificial ingredients. I suggest using a heavy-bottomed pan for the best results in Punjabi cuisine.

INGREDIENTS
- Chicken (thigh pieces) 1kg
- Hung Curd 200g
- Degi Mirch 2tbsp
- Chef's Special Masala 1tbsp
- Dry Dhania (crushed) ½ tbsp
- Lal Mirch (crushed) ½ tbsp
- Salt As per taste
- Mustard Oil 50g
- Garlic Paste ½ tbsp

METHOD
- To clean the chicken, rub some garlic paste, salt and mustard oil on the thigh pieces and leave for about half an hour. Then strain the chicken and get the water out.
- Mix all other ingredients, rub onto the chicken well and marinate for minimum 4 hours.
- Roast the marinated chicken on tandoor or in a home oven, until it is cooked.
- For final touch, add some glistening butter.
- Enjoy your Lal Surkh Chicken Tikka hot!

PINDI CHOLE

A simple, home-style recipe for Pindi Chole which can be easily replicated in homes, not using any artificial ingredients – just fresh vegetables and some masalas. This is actually a Jain-friendly recipe made without onion or garlic.

INGREDIENTS
- Pindi Chole 1 kg
- Cardamom 4 pieces
- Salt As per taste
- Water 6 L
- Channa Masala (homemade if possible) 4tbsp
- Kasuri Methi (roasted) 1 tbsp
- Ajwain ½ tbsp
- Jeera ½ tbsp
- Ginger (juliennes) Few pieces
- Green Chillies (slit ½) 4-5 pieces
- Desi Ghee 200 gm

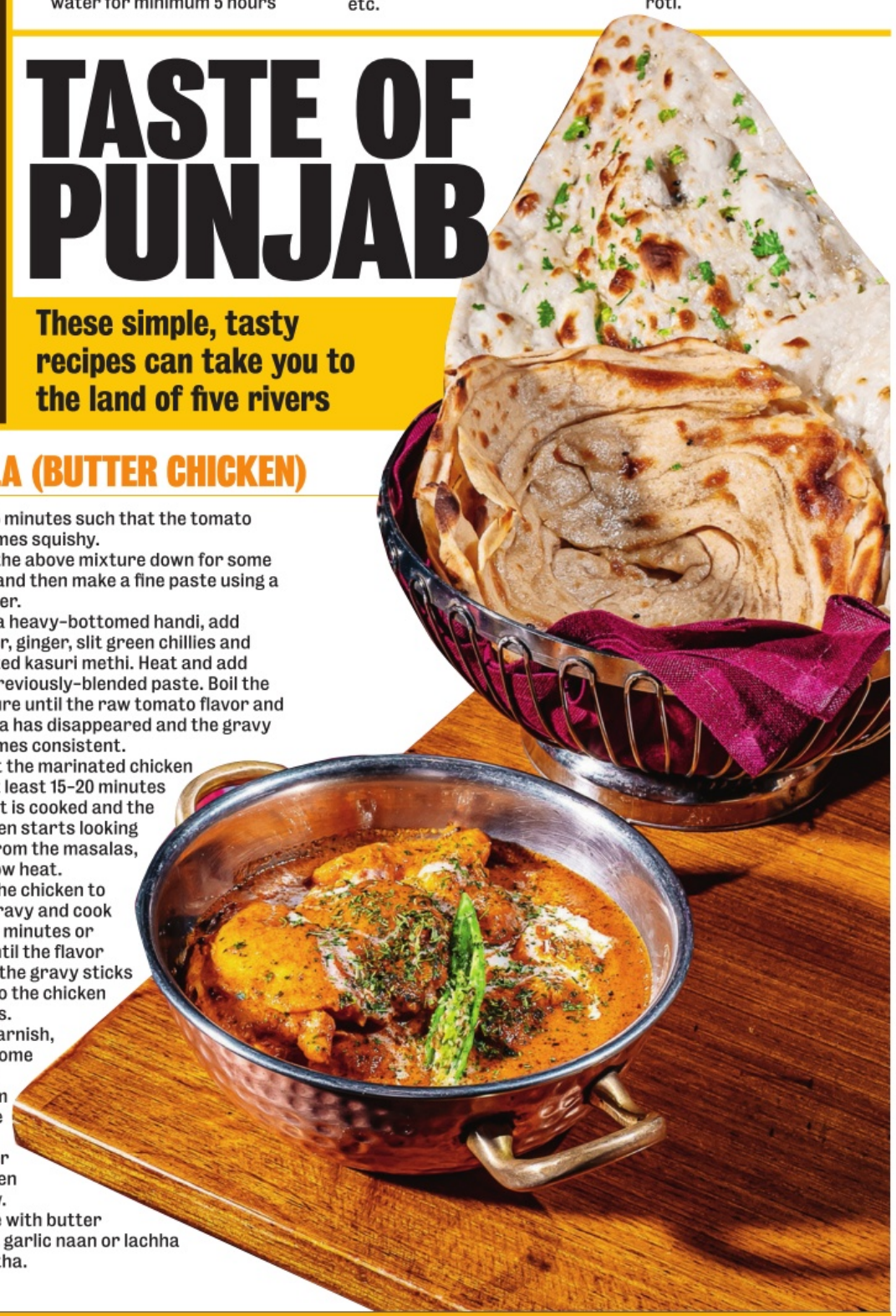
METHOD
- Soak Pindi Chole in 6 liters of water for minimum 5 hours or overnight with salt and whole cardamom.
- After thoroughly washing the chole, take about 3 whistles in a pressure cooker.
- To bring the dark colour to the chole, in an open vessel add some tea leaves or place some tea bags, and simmer for 15-20 minutes on low flame.
- Strain out the chole and remove the tea, cardamom, etc.
- Take the chole in a heavy-bottomed pan, add channa masala as per taste, roasted kasuri methi, ajwain, jeera, little bit julienned ginger pieces and slit green chillies. Mix well.
- Take desi ghee and mix well with the masalas on low flame for a few minutes.
- Serve with butter naan, lachha paratha or tandoori roti.

KUKKAD MAKHANWAALA (BUTTER CHICKEN)

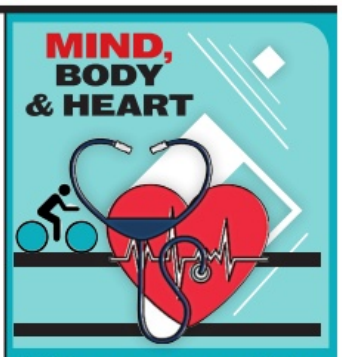
A simple, home-style recipe for using the world-famous Butter Chicken which can be easily replicated in homes, not using any artificial ingredients or pastes – just fresh tomatoes and some masalas. Butter Chicken was invented by the-wallas and have-wallas to use leftover tandoori chicken.

INGREDIENTS
- 1 Chicken 750-800
- Salt As per taste
- Garlic (for marination) ½ tbsp
- Degi Mirch (for marination) ½ tbsp
- Oil 2 tbsp
- Curd 2 tbsp
- Tomato 1 kg
- Cashew 100 g
- Onion 50 g
- Garlic (for gravy) 10 g
- Degi Mirch (for gravy) 1 tbsp
- Desi Ghee 50 g
- Water ½ liter
- Butter 100 g
- Ginger (sliced) 10 g
- Green Chillies (slit ½) 6-7 pieces
- Kasuri Methi (roasted) ½ tsp
- Fresh Cream 2 tbsp

METHOD
- Rub salt, garlic, degi mirch, oil and curd on the chicken and marinate for 2-3 hours.
- To prepare the gravy, take tomato, cashew, onion, garlic, degi mirch, desi ghee and add approx. ½ liter water. Boil on low flame in a heavy-bottomed pan for approximately 20-25 minutes such that the tomato becomes squishy.
- Cool the above mixture down for some time and then make a fine paste using a blender.
- Take a heavy-bottomed handi, add butter, ginger, slit green chillies and roasted kasuri methi. Heat and add the previously-blended paste. Boil the mixture until the raw tomato flavor and aroma has disappeared and the gravy becomes consistent.
- Roast the marinated chicken for at least 15-20 minutes until it is cooked and the chicken starts looking red from the masalas, on slow heat.
- Add the chicken to the gravy and cook for 10 minutes or so, until the flavor from the gravy sticks well to the chicken pieces.
- For garnish, add some fresh cream to the butter chicken gravy.
- Serve with butter naan, garlic naan or lachha paratha.



Chef Harjinder Singh a.k.a Sweety Singh, Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel



All you need to know about...

Napping in infants

Too much napping not good
Infants who nap a lot may have smaller vocabularies and poorer cognitive skills, new research has found.

In comparison
Some children consolidate information during sleep more efficiently and thus, nap less frequently, the research from the University of East Anglia, UK, said.
Others, usually with fewer words and poorer cognitive skills, need to nap more often, the researchers said, adding that reducing their naps would not improve brain development.

Parental anxiety
"There is a lot of parental anxiety around sleep. Parents worry that their kids don't nap as much as expected for their age – or nap too frequently and for too long.
"Young children will naturally nap for as long as they need and they should be allowed to do just that," said Teodora Gliga, lead researcher of the study published in the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry (JCPP) Advances.

Study
The researchers studied 463 infants aged between eight months and three years during lockdown in 2020. Parents were surveyed about their children's sleep patterns, their ability to focus on a task, to retain information, and the number of words they understood and could say. They were also asked about their socio-economic status and education, the neighbourhood they lived in, and the amount of screen time and outdoors activities their child engaged in.

Daytime sleep
"What we found is that the structure of daytime sleep is an indicator of cognitive development," said Gliga.
The negative association between naps frequency and vocabulary was found to be stronger in older children, she said. —PTI

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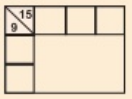
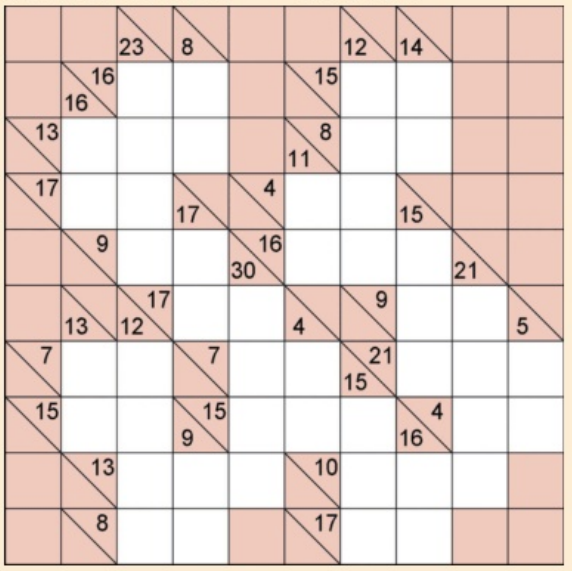
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas



for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.

Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



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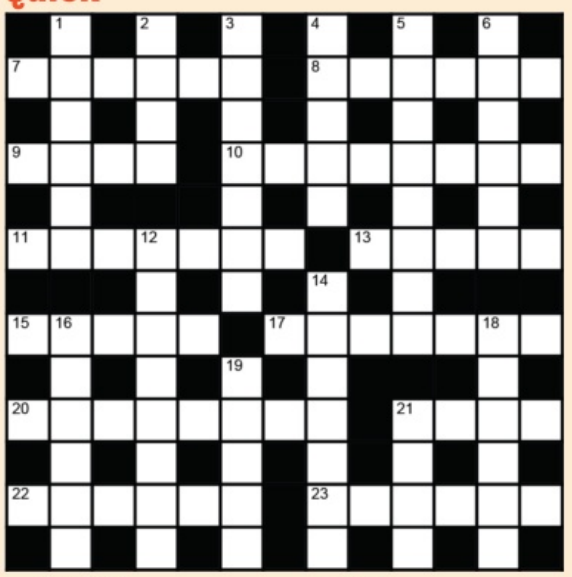


ACROSS

7 Piece of gold (6)
8 Accustoms or gets used to (6)
9 Queue (4)
10 Voluntarily leave the throne (8)
11 Ill-fated (7)
13 Narrow passageways (5)
15 A derivative of ammonia–"I made" anagram ? (5)
17 Inheritance (7)
20 Think too highly of? (8)
21 At the drop of __ ___ : almost instantaneously? (1,3)
22 Discomfiture (6)
23 Canned; preserved by canning (6)

DOWN

1 Swelling of big toe (6)
2 Leer at (4)
3 This cathedral in Bangalore is over 200 years old (2,5)
4 Takes notice (5)
5 The Karate sticks? (8)
6 Snuggle down (6)
12 Ongoing (5,3)
14 Biblical age–three scores and ten? (7)
16 Changing location (6)
18 Satisfies thirst (6)
19 Breathing sounds (5)
21 One of the Royal family (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: T EQUALS G

OCRB LCR OWLRH ULWHLU QSKNKBT KL KU MSSNKUC LS LIHB SMM LCR CRWL.

Linemaro

Help, I need a lifeguard! I am drowning in your eyes

Mindchow

Few are those who see with their own eyes and feel with their own hearts

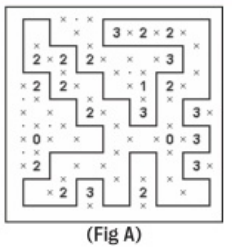
Joke of the day

Always try to be modest. And be damn proud of it!

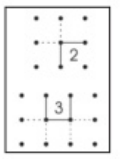
Loop

Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.



(Fig A)



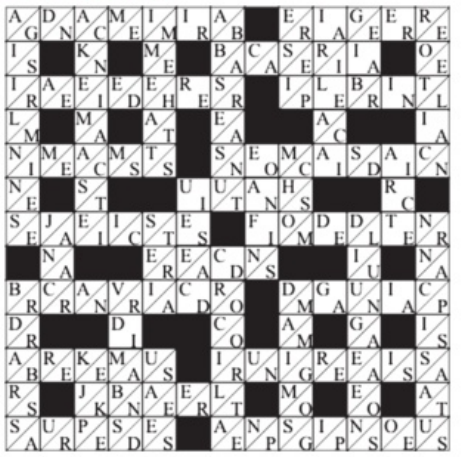
(Fig B) Not Allowed

How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)

Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9			P	

ACROSS

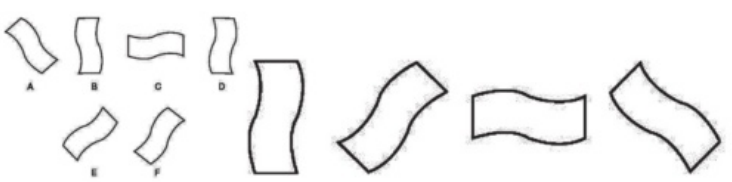
1 Or cha; 6 Cur he;
7 Abe is; 8 Tonne;
9 Sprig

DOWN

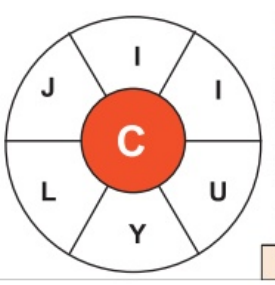
1 Organ; 2 Burro;
3 In CIA; 4 He CEP;
5 Seth's

Mensapuzzle

What comes next in the below sequence?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

01 Average; **02** Good; **03** Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

2		8	6		1	3		5
	1			8			9	
			7		5			
6		2				5		8
	8						7	
1		7				4		9
			4		6			
	3			2			6	
4		5	3		9	2		1

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 17

3 5 6 9

Medium = 4

2 4 6 8

Hard = 10

1 4 7 1

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

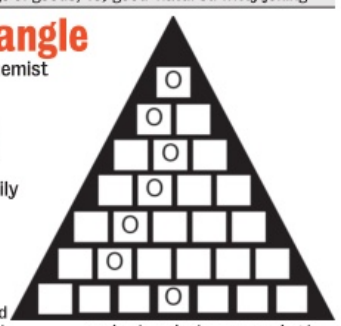
Differences: 1. Paint drop is lower. **2.** Hat is moved. **3.** There is less paint on rim of can. **4.** Brick is moved. **5.** Bottom of shirt is different. **6.** Paintbrush is not as wide .

Riddler

Each group of three definitions describes three words that are spelled the same, except for one letter (each group describes a different set of words). Example: king, ring, wing. **1a)** a bone in the leg, **1b)** arboreal mammal, common to Madagascar, **1c)** to take exception or object **2a)** a mixture of liquids, as for medicine, **2b)** a liquid preparation for cosmetic use, **2c)** an opinion or view **3a)** something having a spiral or twisted form, **3b)** to hold back or restrain, **3c)** the thick part of coagulated milk **4a)** to beat or damage with repeated blows, **4b)** to trade by exchange of goods, **4c)** good-natured witty joking

Alpha triangle

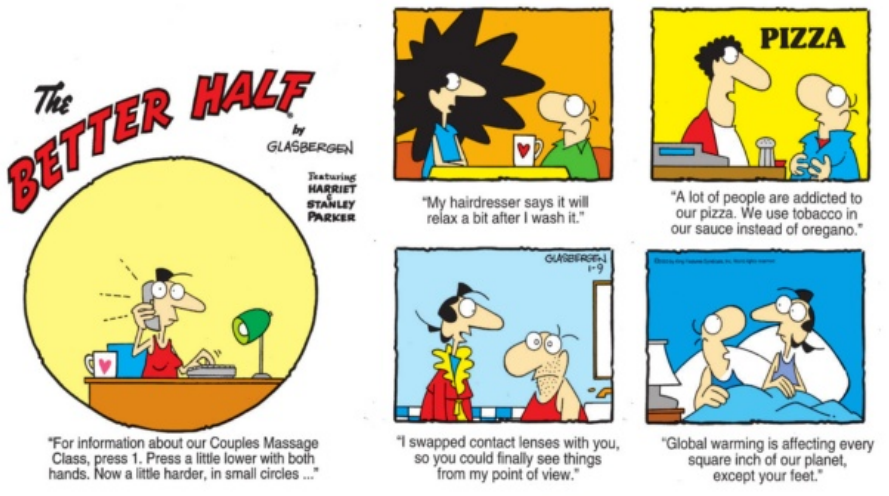
1 Oxygen for the chemist
2 Overdose, abbr.
3 Bambi's mom
4 Medical quantity
5 Energetic people
6 Awakened
7 Gobbles up greedily



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS


The BETTER HALF
by GLASBERGEN
featuring HARRIET & STANLEY PARKER
"For information about our Couples Massage Class, press 1. Press a little lower with both hands. Now a little harder, in small circles ..."
"My hairdresser says it will relax a bit after I wash it."
PIZZA
"A lot of people are addicted to our pizza. We use tobacco in our sauce instead of oregano."
GLASBERGEN
"I swapped contact lenses with you, so you could finally see things from my point of view."
"Global warming is affecting every square inch of our planet, except your feet."

BABY BLUES™
BY RICK KIRKMAN & JERRY SCOTT
ZIPPITY-ZIP!
YOU SURE SEEM CHIPPER.
THAT'S BECAUSE I HAD AN IDEA!
I WAS THINKING HOW GREAT IT WOULD BE IF I SCANNED ALL OF OUR OLD PRINTED PHOTOS AND BLENDED THEM WITH OUR DIGITAL PICS AND VIDEOS INTO ONE BIG ELECTRONIC PHOTO ALBUM, SEARCHABLE BY DATE, LOCATION, AND KEY WORDS...
...WHILE YOU TAKE THE KIDS TO THE PARK.
THAT SOUNDS LIKE AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK.
I KNOW. SO, I CHANGED IT TO PUTTING ON MY SWEATS AND HAVING A GLASS OF WINE, INSTEAD.
SMOOCH
IF YOU NEED ME, I'LL BE HERE, MEETING MY GOALS!

AN ACCIDENTAL BITE BY A RADIOACTIVE SPIDER HAS GIVEN TEENAGER PETER PARKER SUPER POWERS, AND TRANSFORMED HIM INTO--
the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN
STAN LEE
A MURDEROUS MASKED MENACE OR A MODERN-DAY CRUSADER?
IN A LONELY CONSTRUCTION SITE, A FIERCE BATTLE RAGES...
CAN'T GET PAST HIS DEFENSES--!
KTHOW
I'VE LONG ENVIED YOU YOUR SPIDER-STRENGTH...
BUT IT WAS INCONVENIENT TO BE BITTEN BY A RADIOACTIVE ARACHNID--
--SO I HIRED A PERSONAL TRAINER--
--WHO HELPED ME DEVELOP FIGHTING SKILLS THAT NEGATE YOUR SPIDER-POWERS!
SWINGIN'
THWIPP
I GOTTA ADMIT-- YOU OWE THE GUY A RAISE!
I'M GETTING NOWHERE AGAINST KINGPIN--
--AND IRON FIST ISN'T DOING ANY BETTER WITH THE GOLDEN CLAW!
THERE'S GOT TO BE A WAY TO BREAK THIS LOGJAM--BUT WHAT IS IT?
WHAT??
PLAIN AS THE MASK ON YOUR FACE!

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today is not a good day due to anxiety and restlessness. You may waste your precious time doing worthless tasks. You may plan to visit some religious places to seek peace of mind. You may get some advice from your elders, which may show you some direction to manage the messy situation.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Today in social get together, you will re-establish your network, which will give you benefits in near future. Natives related to glamour, art, fashion will plan to do something new in terms of their profession. Students will perform better today in terms of study. Love birds will enjoy their happy moments.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Today you may be busy on the work front, which may make you tired and may be not able to properly spend time with your family. You may be able to create some overseas networks also. You should be careful in terms of investments. Natives in the job may get a promotion.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Today's situation is under control now. Your destiny is likely to be with you in terms of gains in business. You may get some rewards for your hard work. It may be a good time to reinitiate your postponed projects. You may expect peaceful religious travel. You may also plan to donate some amount to any religious place or to some charity.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Today your moon is not in a good position; you may have health issues. You may face losses in the business or in investment. It is advised not to invest into business. Your gains will convert into losses, so you are advised to stop making investments in worthless objects. You should avoid being involved in controversies, otherwise it will pull you down negatively.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
You are blessed by the moon today. You may expect some good news in terms of profession. Domestic life is likely to be in full swings of joy. You are advised to avoid making arguments on worthless topics. Over excitement may test your patience. You can make important decisions in making investments in real estate. Students may be focused on their studies.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
You will feel some dullness but somehow you are likely to get back to your work. You may pay extra attention to the kid's academics. You are likely to be in the winning position against your enemies and opponents. Investors shall be careful while making difficult decisions. Job seekers may find suitable jobs.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Today you may find negative vibrations around you, which may make you unhappy. You should avoid making investments on worthless assets. You may notice that friends may not be supportive today, so you should not expect more from them for help, otherwise it may make you more upset. You should make independent decisions today.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Today you may feel dull; you may face obstacles in your work front. You should keep patience in making investments. Quick decisions in business are not advisable today. You are likely to spend money on worthless stuff, which may make your family unhappy.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Today your hard work may pay you in terms of success. You may plan to go for a short work related trip. Your subordinates may support you in implementing your business plans. Your opponents may praise your hard work. You may hear good news in terms of siblings.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Today you may be able to control your expenditures on worthless stuff. You are likely to plan to invest capital in the business. You may invest your savings into some real estate projects, which will boost your financial health in the near future. You may be polite with others. You may be able to focus on domestic affairs but your spouse will become upset or will have some health issues .

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Today you may have good vitality and inner strength. You are likely to make good plans and may implement them efficiently. You might carefully read documents before putting a signature. Due to over enthusiasm, you may invest some capital into family business. Love birds shall avoid discussing worthless topics.

KIDZONE

Aashita Rawat, 6 Years, Vidya Niketan School

Suraj Madhur, 10 Years, Agragami Vidya Kendra

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru- 560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
20×2−(9.8+2))^2^
20×2−(4.9)×4
40−19.6
20.4

BULL'S EYE
icity, JUICILY, juicy

FAST FIVE

G	R	I	P	S
N	O	N	E	T
A	B	I	E	S
O	R	A	C	H

QUOTE UNCODE
When the water starts boiling it is foolish to turn off the heat.

STRIKE OUT

S	U	E	D	E		E	N	G	I	N	E	S		
S		K	N	E	E	L		O		O		T		
A	R	E	A	S		I	N	G	R	E	S	S		
R		I		C		A		G		I				
B	R	A	V	A	D	O		M	A	N	I	C		
	A		R	E	D	S			U			A		
E	J	E	C	T	S		F	O	D	D	E	R		
N		T		U	T	A	H			R				
I	M	A	M	S		N	O	M	A	D	I	C		
L		M		T		E		C				I		
R	A	I	D	E	R	S		P	E	R	I	L		
A	N	A	E	M	I	A		E	A	G	E	R		
I		N		E		B	A	S	R	A		E		
N	U	G	G	E	T		E	N	U	R	E	S		

QUICK

G		Y		S		Y		E		S				
U	N	E	A	S	E		T	I	N	N	E	D		
I		W		L		N		N		K				
O	V	E	R	E	R	A	T	E		A	H	A	T	
O		E		R		V				L				
A	M	I	D	E		B	E	Q	U	E	S	T		
N				N		S		S		K				
U	N	L	U	C	K	Y		L	A	N	E	S		
O				R		S		H		L				
L	I	N	E		A	B	O	I	C	A	T	E		
N		L		M		E		N		S				
N	U	G	G	E	T		E	N	U	R	E	S		
B		O		S		H		N		N				

MENSA PUZZLE
D: the figure is rotating 45° clockwise at each stage.

RIDDLER
1) femur, lemur, demur,
2) potion, lotion, notion,
3) curl, curb, curd, batter, barter, banter

SUDOKU

4	6	5	3	7	9	2	8	1
7	3	1	5	2	8	9	6	4
8	2	9	4	1	6	7	5	3
1	5	7	8	6	3	4	2	9
3	8	4	9	5	2	1	7	6
6	9	2	1	4	7	5	3	8
9	4	6	7	3	5	8	1	2
5	1	3	2	8	4	6	9	7
2	7	8	6	9	1	3	4	5

ALPHA TRIANGLE
0, 00, Doe,
Dose, Doers,
Roused,
Devours.

GO FIGURE
Easy
6 + 5 − 3 + 9 = 17
Medium
6 / 2 x 4 − 8 = 4
Hard
4 + 7 x 1 − 1 = 10

LOOP

KAKURO

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What's on auction?
The helmet worn by Robert Downey Jr in 'Iron Man 3', wands used in the Harry Potter films, the mask in 'Deadpool' and a Captain America shield, are among a host of film paraphernalia set to be auctioned

DIRECTOR'S ACTOR

Janhvi prefers to follow director's words and learn more about the craft

As she worked with Nitesh Tiwari in her latest film Bawaal, Janhvi Kapoor mentioned that she learnt to be relaxed while working on a film, on a set. The actress who anticipated that she would have to pick up a lot as an actor while working with the director who she admired, Janhvi instead learned the importance of being calm on sets.

She says that she likes learning different methods while working with different directors.

As Janhvi teamed up with the Chhichhore director for the first time, she said, "The kind of an actor that I am and I want to be... I like the thrill of following my director's lead for each film. So, the director can be demanding or can expect my emotional and physical investment... I will just go with him/her on that journey."

She further adds, "I like to follow my director and learn more about myself in the process and also the craft. As an artiste you can pick up different things in different processes and it in a way, I think, makes each performance more different."

Earlier, talking about working on her latest flick, Janhvi had told BT, "One doesn't have to struggle and take pressure to guarantee results. Sometimes you can just enjoy the process, believe in what you are doing and follow your director's lead and the results can be equally special. I think I understood the value of being relaxed on this set and performing."

—Onkar Kulkarni, ETimes

Forest and divine power

AURA
2.5 RATING | ★★½☆☆
- **DIRECTOR** Vijayamurthy
- **ACTORS** AR Rohit, Deepika Aradhya, Anand Ninasam, Satya Raj, Sonia Krishnamurthy, Nikhil
- **CERTIFICATION** U/A
- **DURATION** 129 minutes

This is yet another film highlighting the importance of forests and divine power. This movie throws light on the issue of youngsters from conservative families who do not get the freedom to lead a life they want without restrictions. The director has tried to say that the youth must be allowed to live the way they want. He has also included environmental issues in the movie by introducing sandalwood smugglers who are destroying the forests.

The movie begins with Aura (AR Rohit), a priest-cum-photographer, agreeing to organise a photo shoot for Meera (Deepika Aradhya), a painter and biker. Aura, accompanied by Putta (Nikhil), visits Meera's house for the photo shoot. Meera falls in love with Aura. She wants to meet Aura at night and seeks Putta's help. She also wants to know more about Aura. Putta tells her how Aura used to suffer from anthropophobia and how his father Narasimha (Anand Ninasam), a priest, used to ask Aura to restrict himself to performing pooja to the deity.

Disgusted with discrimination and ill-treatment by anti-social elements, Aura pleads with his father to allow him to go to Bengaluru to lead a life on his own. After staying in Bengaluru for a few months, Aura decides to go back to hometown to help his father. What happens to Aura and his father Narasimha is what Aura is all about.

As far as the performance of the actors is concerned, Rohit looks handsome and stylish as a professional photographer. His character has two shades. His dialogue delivery and body language are good. Deepika Aradhya doesn't have much scope to showcase her acting skills. Nikhil's dialogues tickle the funny bone. Anand Ninasam, Chakrapani, and Satyaraj provide good support. Aura would have been a better movie had the director kept the narration crisper in the post-intermission part.

The film is an eye-opener on the effects of restrictions on the youth in the name of culture and traditions.

—Y Maheswara Reddy

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ULTIMATE SAVINGS BUCKET
SAVE UP TO 40%
pepsi
Let's KFC
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